

**A PATTERN FOR PREACHING:
A SELF-STUDY MANUAL IN BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION AND
SERMON DEVELOPMENT FOR SAMOAN UNITED METHODIST
LAY PREACHER**

**A Professional Project
Presented to
the Faculty of the
Claremont School of Theology**

**In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry**

**by
Pita Uelese Lauti
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This professional project completed by

PITA UELESE LAUTI

has been presented to and accepted by the
faculty of Claremont School of Theology in
partial fulfillment of the requirements of the

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Faculty Committee

Lincoln Galloway, Chairperson

Michael Mata

Dean of the Faculty

Susan L. Nelson

May 2007

ABSTRACT

A Pattern for Preaching: A Self-study manual in Biblical Interpretation and Sermon Development for Samoan United Methodist Lay Preachers.

by

Pita U. Lauti

The purpose of this project is to train men and women who sense a call from God to preach. The people who will find this project most beneficial will be Samoan lay preachers who have not been able to attend a theological college or seminary, those who are called to preach later in life, bi-vocational pastors, and laymen and women who have the opportunity to preach occasionally.

The project aims on producing a manual for Samoan lay preachers on biblical interpretation and sermon development. It provides reflection on the need to equip lay preachers to preach and teach from a biblical perspective. It highlights the need for spiritual call and growth. Then it turns towards sermon development, beginning with the selection, and the use of basic tools to conduct a biblical exegesis. The project then moves to basic hermeneutical principles to prepare a biblical message; by gathering illustrations; by developing a message with an introduction, body, illustrations, application and conclusion. The final task includes the basic principles of sermon delivery. The project begins with an understanding that most preachers in Samoa churches tend to follow an expository preaching style. As a result the focus of this project is to train lay preachers in the expository form of biblical preaching.

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To my wife, Vaiola, who has shared with me the vision of completing this program and the responsibilities that it entailed. Without her by my side to encourage me and push me to my greatest level, this would not have been possible. Hence, I give my utmost love and appreciation to her for being my strongest supporter.

To my children, Feagai (son) and Lina (daughter-in-law), Lealoa (daughter) and Pomale (son-in-law), Cecelia (daughter) and Tigaina (son-in-law), Leafuafuolesau (daughter) and Thomas (son-in-law), Pita Jr. (son), Timothy (son), and Tara (daughter, who God called home and, the only one who supported me whole heartedly when I decided to dedicate my life to becoming a minister). I would like to give my thanks for their patience and more than ever their humbleness.

To our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, I offer my praise and thanksgiving, without Him this would not have been possible. He was there to give me the strength and encouragement when I needed it the most. He never left me when I doubted myself. Therefore, to God be the glory and honor, for He is the one that made it possible for me to accomplish my goal. Thus, to Him I give highest gratitude and adoration.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Preaching is one of the primary methods of educating, motivating, leading, and evangelizing people within the Samoan United Methodist Church. The Samoan church needs a strong pulpit ministry and pastors must develop fully their preaching ability, to serve effectively in the Samoan contexts. Clyde E. Fant states succinctly: "Nothing is more sought today by lay people and preachers alike than a meaningful sound from the pulpit."¹ According to Richard Lischer of Duke University: "Preaching is the final expression of theology. It is toward preaching that theology has been tending. After the exegete has told us what the text once meant, and the systematician has told us what the text means in its historical, doctrinal, and philosophical setting, the preacher ... executes the text by helping it to speak to a particular time, situation, and people."²

The goal of this project is to develop a training manual designed for the practice of preaching, from the study of Scripture to sermon construction and delivery, to assist Samoan Lay preachers for a more meaningful and improved preaching. The idea for this project developed as a result of several factors. Some observations emerged in the context of the Samoan Lay Preachers' Movement in the early seventies. As a result, I recognized the needs of the smaller and poorer Samoan congregations. I was greatly involved with the movement at Fetu Ao First Samoan United Methodist Church in Torrance, California, as Sunday school teacher, and the administration council of the

¹ Clyde E. Fant, Preaching for Today (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1975), xi.

² Richard Lischer, A Theology of Preaching: The Dynamics of the Gospel (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981), 27.

church. This experience gave me the opportunity to interact with several pastors and lay people of the various churches, and to preach in several churches. Many of our Samoan churches are small and struggling. In many instances they are not financially strong. This makes it very difficult for them to attract well-trained pastoral leaders or even send them to seminary. As a result, many of these churches have experienced serious problems such as a decline in membership and instability. Observing these problems and interacting with pastors and laymen and women have led me to the conclusion that there should be other approaches aimed at equipping untrained Samoan lay preachers.

Another factor that influenced the development of this project arose from conversation with Professor Dr. Irwin Trotter during which he shared his observations on Pacific Islander ministers' preaching. He praised Pacific Islanders as good preachers but commented that there has been no scholarly work done in the area of the homily. Professor Trotter has now retired from teaching but the challenge of that conversation remained in my mind all these years. He challenged me to think of writing something that was relevant to preaching in the Pacific Islands.

This project is thus designed to help those who receive the call to preach, but cannot attend seminary to improve their preaching. It seeks to highlight the necessary steps and skills in the research, development, and delivery of Biblical messages. As I launched out as a beginning preacher, I felt like a young boy who opens a box filled with bicycle parts. Everything is in the box, handlebars, tires, seat, pedals, decals, but the young boy discovers that there are no illustrated, step-by-step instructions with which to assemble the bike.

Many would-be lay preachers in the Samoan church feel the same. They may possess an understanding of the elements of sermons, yet they lack a model that shows how the pieces fit together. Thus, the hope of this project is to offer an illustrated, step-by-step manual of sermon preparation for Samoan lay preachers.

In the early years of Christianity in the islands, Samoans were interested and open to religious innovation. The few Europeans already resident in Samoa often found themselves sought out by the Samoan people to act as leaders of worship, instructors in doctrine and providers of baptism and healing. Most of these men were deserters, deficient in both theological knowledge and Christian commitment.³ However, they were able to meet the demand for religious knowledge and were given respect by their listeners until the newly arrived Christian missionaries claimed their bible based words as the only authentic source of Christian teaching. John Williams and Charles Barff of the pioneering London Missionary Society were pleasantly surprised when they landed at Sapapali'i (the largest village of Savai'i, Western Samoa) to inaugurate the mission and were welcomed by the Samoans with open arms. Both chiefs and people vied with each other in expressions of kindness and delight. They gave the very best of dwellings for public worship and instruction.⁴ The involvement of lay preachers in proclaiming God's Word within the Samoan churches goes back to the earliest missionary work in Samoa which began in 1830. It began as an outgrowth ministry by utilizing laypersons as volunteers to lead Bible study groups.

According to Peter Turner, "Samoa was visited by John Williams of the London Missionary Society in 1830 and the Islands were thus considered to be LMS territory.

³ John Williams, Missionary Enterprises, 421-22.

⁴ John Williams, Missionary Enterprises, 355-56; Samoan Journals, 70.

They placed some LMS Tahitian teachers in Samoa but delayed sending any European missionaries for six years.”⁵ At the same time, the Wesleyan missionaries in Tonga extended their operations to Samoa and, as early as 1828, and by 1835 there were many Tongan teachers in Samoa with many congregations to whom the biblical message was being taught. Even with the limited numbers of European missionaries, the church continued to grow and there was a great need in Samoa for lay preachers to lead the people in Bible study and other services.

To this end, and in keeping with the needs of the believers in Samoa, the leaders looked for an increased expression of the spiritual gifts within their own people. They felt that the church laity should use this freedom of expression. They felt it was unnecessary to wait for ordained clergy but simply to allow the Lord to minister to them from among their midst. This they believed was one implication of the spiritual injunction of 1 Peter 2: 9, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, and a holy nation, God’s own people in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (NRSV). They also believed that the teaching and preaching should not be restricted to the clergy and they refused to limit the use of spiritual gifts to them.

The result is that over the years the work of preaching and teaching the bible has been the responsibility of a variety of men and women who received training from the Tongan lay preachers. Nelson Annan observed that in Samoa there existed “the opportunity for the free development of anyone with spiritual gifts in preaching and teaching, irrespective of his education or training. However, it has also left those same

⁵ Peter Turner, Journal of Peter Turner (Laie, Hawaii: Ati’s Samoa Print Shop, 1992), 1.

assemblies open to great abuse in this area. With various untrained men preaching, the caliber of sermons heard on Sundays has often been poor at best. This, in turn, has caused people either to leave these churches or to lower their expectations.”⁶

The Samoan United Methodist church community, together with many other churches, will continue to depend upon the use of lay preachers for the proclamation of God’s message in the future. As that takes place, benefits can surely be realized through the use of the training manual this project envisions. Duane Litfin remarks: “The Bible is accessible to all of God’s people. Every Christian is capable of understanding it and applying it to his or her life. What is more, with a bit of thought and direction, and a lot of hard work, most Christians are also capable of helping others understand Scripture, too. Seminaries train preachers professionally to do just this, but that in no way rules out others from the field. In fact, there are many audiences that will not listen to a professional, but will give a layman a full hearing. You need not hold back from preparing and delivering a Bible message as long as you are willing to put forth the necessary effort to do the job well.”⁷ In recent years there seems to be a growing consensus that the training of lay preachers to preach is indispensable.

On his second visit, in 1832, John Williams on arriving at Manu’a (a group of islands in eastern Samoa) met an Austral Islander who told him that the Samoans had “no maraes or houses for their worship. They have no priests. The Chief prays as well as all the people.”⁸ It became clear to later observers that formal religious observance in

⁶ Nelson Annan, Teaching Laymen to Preach Expository Sermons (Thesis Denver Conservative Baptist Seminary, 1987), 9.

⁷ A. Duane Litfin, Public Speaking: A Handbook for Christians (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), 331-32.

⁸ Williams, 102.

Samoa was located to a large extent in the household. The head of the extended family, the *matai*, chief, led household worship, ensuring that the family gods were honored and could express their will; he was thus not only a chief but also a priest and a prophet.⁹

Beyond the household, village gods too were served by the *matai* or sometimes also by an identifiable class of priest known as *taula aitu* (literally ‘anchors of the gods’) who were not necessarily male or of chiefly rank. They received and made offerings at small temples, ascertained the causes of illness and misfortune, and when possessed by the gods could speak their will.¹⁰

Aside from religion, Samoa has a culture in which speech is often compared to preaching. The structure of oratory suggested by Tatupu has seven parts. “The *tuvaoga* (introduction or opening) of which the language and stylistic content of the introduction consist of proverbial phrases relating to mythology, traditions, history and folklore. The ‘*ava* (kava) when *matai* chiefs convene for the *usualele* (welcome ceremony) and *ali’itaeao* (presentation of kava) when the *kava* roots are symbolically presented to visitors before the major speeches of welcome begin. The “*fa’afetai le alofa o le Atua*” (thanksgiving for God’s love) expresses thanks for God’s love and kindness, but also includes references to ancestors. The *paia* (dignities) in which, following the thanksgiving to God, the orator proceeds to acknowledge the dignities and sacred rights of the titles. The *taeao* (mornings, important occasions), these are of great significance in Samoan history and those relating to the gospel. The orator chooses the specific morning to use in his speech, taking into account the nature of his own role and the social context of the ceremony. The *faia or mataupu* (blood or affiliated relationships, or the

⁹ George Turner, *Samoa a Hundred Years Ago* (London: Macmillan 1884), 18.

¹⁰ John B. Stair, *Old Samoa or Flotsam and Jetsam from the Pacific Ocean* (London, 1897), 220-28.

agenda), *faia* (a relationship), by affinity or marriage, is a crucial part of a *lauga* (speech) for weddings, welcomes, title investitures and funerals. It links the past to the present, relating to genealogy, alliances, historical appointments and covenants, and new connections established by marriage, and the other events. Finally, the *faamatafi lagi* (clearing of the skies or conclusion) is wishing good luck, peace and prosperity for the visitors and then for the orator's own party.¹¹

Problem Addressed by This Project

The purpose of this project is to provide a training manual to assist Samoan lay preachers by means of training opportunities to prepare themselves as they sense a call from God to preach and lead a local Samoan United Methodist congregation within the Samoan context.

Importance of the Problem

In Samoa men and women who sense a call from God to preach and lead worship have few training opportunities available to them to prepare for preaching. They are faced with the difficult task of sermon preparation due to lack of understanding of steps in the process of preparing a sermon. They have not been able to attend a Christian college or seminary. Many of them are persons who are called to preach later in life, bivocational pastors, and lay people who have an opportunity to preach occasionally. They lack knowledge of biblical languages, exegetical skills, and possess a limited educational

¹¹ Tatupu Faafetai Mataafa Tui, *Lauga: Samoan Oratory* (Suva Fiji: University of the South Pacific; National University of Samoa, 1987), 23.

background. Their education or preparation requires studies including selection and understanding of biblical texts, analyzing the audience and the message idea, and the purpose and form of the message. Effective preaching requires weaving together the knowledge of the culture as well as developing the appropriate communication style. Preachers in this situation need training or resources to assist them in preparing to preach effectively within the Samoan tradition.

There are many other problems of ministry for a Samoan lay preacher, but the problem that has been the most challenging to me is the regular practice of creating, researching, and structuring of a sermon. The urgent need of the Samoan community in the 21st century is for preaching that is genuinely biblical. This need is for a word from pulpits that can be heard as an inspired word from the God who is revealed in the Scriptures. One of the most effective strategies for reaching the non-churched and for building up the spiritual strength of believers lies in equipping lay preachers to prepare biblical messages. In some Samoan churches, the preaching and teaching of God's Word is delegated entirely to well-trained ministers who communicate with skill and relevance. This is not true with most churches, however. Even within those churches where an ordained minister is responsible for the majority of preaching and teaching, many opportunities exist for the proclamation of God's Word by lay preachers.

Wherever there is a need to communicate and teach the gospel of Jesus Christ, there can be an opportunity for lay preachers to effectively minister if they have been trained in the preparation of the biblical message. In an article by Duane Litfin in *A Handbook for Christians*, he goes on to note, "The world is looking for people who know

what they are talking about. In a time so dependent upon communication, Christians who are willing to think deeply and speak out effectively can make a lasting impact.”¹²

The purpose of this project will be to provide such training, albeit at an introductory level.

Statement of the Thesis

The objective of this project is to propose, explain, and illustrate a process to prepare Samoan lay preachers to preach in the Samoan United Methodist Church context.

Definitions of Major Terms

Exegesis: The critical study of a scriptural text with a view towards understanding its exact meaning. It usually includes a technical examination of the terms of the text and the grammatical relationships of the text.

Hermeneutics: The methods, rules and principles of interpretation that are applied during the exegetical process.

Work Previously Done in the Field

Not until the late 1960s did Christian literature become regularly available in the Pacific-Samoan context. Even now, there are only a few published materials in the area of Samoan preaching and other related issues. The works of a few Samoan preachers are

¹² Litfin. 18.

very helpful tools for this project. These works have been published in the “*Sulu Samoa*” a monthly magazine by the Congregational Church formerly known as the London Missionary Society (LMS), and “*Fetu Ao*” a Samoan Wesleyan Methodist magazine that provides preaching materials which includes sermons and structures of sermons.

The Reverend Misi Alatise wrote a “*Ta’iala mo Failauga*” (Guidance for Lay Preachers), within the Samoan Wesleyan Methodist church.¹³ Milton Crum Jr. who has depicted the difficulty of moving from the text to the sermon with remarkable clarity, has offered concrete help to this project. He has twenty-five years of ordained ministry as a parish pastor and ten years as a professor of homiletics at a theological seminary. In his book, *Manual on Preaching*, he presents methods which have produced effective sermons in Crum’s ten years of teaching homiletics classes and of reading about preaching, Bible, and communication studies.¹⁴ Ernest Edward Hunt III suggested four methods of preparing sermons: the text, cultural, pastoral, and conflict methods.¹⁵ Hunt had used these methods as an experiment with a group of people who volunteered to listen to each sermon, discuss it after it had been preached, and provide information from their meetings as data for consideration and evaluation. He then compared it to the words that were prepared.

The first thing in preparing a sermon is the *idea*. The *idea* will usually come from reading the Scripture. After refining the idea, then, it is time to consider the most important steps in the process of developing the sermon; that is, the identifying of the

¹³ Misi Alatise, *O le Ta’iala mo Failauga* (Unpublished manuscript, Malifa, 1984), 1.

¹⁴ Milton Crum, Jr., *Manual on Preaching* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1977), 16.

¹⁵ Ernest Edward Hunt III, *Sermon Struggles* (New York: Seabury Press, 1982), 15.

overall purpose of the sermon. Killinger mentioned in his book, *Fundamentals of Preaching*, not only finding the idea and purpose, but he pointed out the importance of sermon outlining, brainstorming, progression of the sermon, and metaphor. These elements are important because they help the preacher see the facts and also their limitations. A good preacher relies upon a good outline. A good outline comes from carefully studying the Scripture and other materials.¹⁶

Samoan lay preachers are in desperate need of understanding and interpreting the Bible. One important resource that has been missing is a manual to guide them in sermon preparation, principles and techniques of biblical exegesis and biblical interpretation, which helps to incorporate the outcome of the study into a sermon. In accordance with Thomas Long, "Congregations want to hear well-executed preaching: they desperately need to hear thoughtful and faithful preaching of the gospel. Such preaching requires study, practice, hard work, and training."¹⁷

An unpublished *Taiala mo Failauga* (Guidance for Lay Preachers) by Misi Alalise, a minister and teacher at Methodist in Samoa helps set the standard for this project in terms of laying the foundation to follow his structure of this type of manual. Alalise describes six steps in sermon preparation in his project: studying the text, stating the theme, developing the outline, illustrating the points, introducing and concluding the sermon, and applying the points.¹⁸ It is appropriate to follow this style of training manual that is obviously necessary for the Samoan lay preacher. Of course, the whole idea is to develop a simple step-by-step manual to integrate the ideas to follow.

¹⁶ John Killinger, *Fundamentals of Preaching*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 88.

¹⁷ Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1989), 21.

¹⁸ Alalise, 12.

According to Crocker, preaching has never been easy, and at the start it was often exceedingly painful. He quotes Harry Emerson Fosdick who said, "I was tossed into my first parish over fifty years ago, like a boy thrown into deep water and told to swim when he does not know how. You cannot teach an art simply by talking about it."¹⁹

Crocker suggests that no homiletic method is without its dangers. There are always some definite problems that seem trivial and they are real and often it is the fault of unprepared and unskilled preacher. He said. "The preacher's business is not merely to discuss repentance, but to persuade people to repent; not merely to debate the meaning and possibility of Christian faith but to produce Christian faith in the lives of his listeners; not merely to talk about the available power of God to bring victory over trouble and temptation but to send people out from their worship on Sunday with victory in their possession. A preacher's task is to create in his or her congregation the thing he or she is talking about."²⁰ Crocker talks about "the difference between a sermon and a lecture. A lecture is chiefly concerned with a *subject* to be elucidated: a sermon is chiefly concerned with an *object* to be achieved."²¹

What most students of the art of preaching want to know of one who has long practiced the skill is: "How do you actually make a sermon?" "How do you prepare to preach?" These are probably the two most important questions a lay preacher would struggle with. And it is not an easy task. Sangster says, "Preaching involves direct and indirect preparation. Each sermon calls for particular preparation, but all sermons call for

¹⁹ Lionel Crocker, comp. and ed., Harry Emerson Fosdick's Art of Preaching: An Anthology (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas Publisher, 1971), 5.

²⁰ Crocker, 6.

²¹ Crocker, 17.

general preparation too. All life is preparation for preaching. The life of the Christian is a 'life hidden within Christ in God.'”²²

Scope and Limitations of the Project

This project will address the needs of Samoan lay preachers within the church who desire to prepare and deliver biblical messages for a variety of settings where teaching and preaching take place.

This project is concerned with patterns and understandings of preaching in Samoa and Samoan American contexts. It looks at the pattern of preaching that Samoan clergy have used and their effectiveness in the present situation within the Samoan congregation.

Procedure for Integration

The first step in this project was to carefully research and listen to sermons preached by Samoan lay preachers. I visited other churches for the purpose of analyzing sermons of Samoan preachers to determine the characteristics of Samoan sermons. Secondly, I engaged current trends of preaching in order to reflect on elements that are significant for Samoan preaching. Finally, after collecting and evaluating these elements, I integrated them together as a unified method and foundation in constructing a preaching manual for lay preachers in the Samoan context.

²² W. E. Sangster, The Craft of Sermon Construction (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1951), 153.

Chapter Outlines

Chapter 1 is the introduction and the purpose of the manual.

Chapter 2 deals with making the Bible a resource for preaching and incorporating other resources in developing standard procedures for sermon preparation. It deals with topics, such as, equipping lay preachers, preaching and teaching, rules for preaching and gifts for preaching and teaching.

Chapter 3 addresses the concepts of observation, interpretation, and application, as key principles in the preparation of biblical messages.

Chapter 4 demonstrates the process of sermon preparation and its formation from beginning to end. The development of the structure of sermons in terms of text selection, outlines, context of audience, illustration and application.

Chapter 5 brings together all the finding of the study and summarizes the value of this work for the Samoan context.

Chapter 2

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

Equipping Lay Preachers

In many Samoan churches, lay preachers are already used extensively in a variety of ministries, including those that require the preaching and teaching of God's Word. Placing the Bible in the hands of the laity remains one of the most remarkable fruits of the Protestant churches. In the 16th century Martin Luther translated the Bible into his native German. Other churches also demonstrated a similar conviction that the Holy Scriptures should be made available in the language of the people. Once the exclusive domain of the ordained clergy, scripture was now set free and made available to each and every Christian. John Williams of the LMS (London Missionary Society) brought Christianity into Samoa in 1830. But in 1836 six British missionaries arrived in Samoa. One of the six was the Rev. A. W. Murray, who, in many ways, was the most successful and remarkable of the missionaries to the Samoan island. He advanced the translation of the Bible into the Samoan language. It took more than thirty years for this work to be completed. The New Testament was translated first and printed in 1847, and at the close of 1855 the Old Testament was completed. When the missionaries first arrived in Samoa they put all their efforts into translating the Scriptures into the Samoan language.

Today the laity enjoys the Word of God through an amazing variety and number of texts. But when evaluated by how these Bibles are actually used it seems that many

churches have not realized the ideals of the Reformation. Wilhoit and Ryken writing about the North American context noticed:

The Protestant tradition has been quicker to assert the right and responsibility of Bible study in both the home and the church than it has been to equip the laity for this task. Pastors typically exhort their parishioners to read and study the bible and are distressed when the advice goes unheeded. But seldom do ministers provide their congregations or even their Sunday school teachers with a method for reading, studying, and teaching the Bible.¹

One reason they feel this takes place is that for instance, many pastors trained to study Scripture from an academic perspective do not know how someone lacking exegetical skills can be trained to interpret the Bible well. There is also a fear that lay Bible study, especially that takes place in small group studies, may lead to far-out interpretations and theological turmoil in the church.

Nevertheless, equipping lay preachers for effective ministry remains one of the chief endeavors of every Samoan pastor within the church of Jesus Christ. A notable text regarding this is found in Ephesians 4: 11-12. The apostle Paul writes, “The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.”

The critical phrase here is: “to equip the saints for the work of ministry,” or “for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry.” The rationale behind much of every pastor’s ministry should be the building up or edification of the body of Christ for the purpose of ministry. As Thomas Oden has said:

For this reason some persons are appointed pastors and teachers, to equip the laity, to enable the whole body to build itself up in love, to prepare it inwardly and outwardly, to get it ready for its task,

¹ Jim Wilhoit and Leland Ryken, Effective Bible Teaching (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Company, 1988), 38.

and to provide logistical support for the mission to be accomplished.²

The pastor's primary task is to equip the body of Christ so that it may in turn serve the needs of both the church and the outside community. When this task is ignored the pastor suffers because no single person is capable of accomplishing the work for an entire congregation and the laity is not well served because they forego the opportunity and blessing of ministry. An interesting biblical text that can be appealed to in this connection is found in Exodus 18. Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, helped him to deal more effectively with the task of leadership when Moses was overwhelmed by the demands of his office. Moses, who had been hearing and settling an endless number of disputes, had people standing in line to see him all day. Jethro was concerned. He wondered why Moses attempted to minister to the needs of so many people on his own. Surely such a practice would only wear him out as well as the people he was trying to serve.

Jethro's advice was that Moses search for capable, God-fearing persons among all the people. He could then appoint these as officers over units of a thousand, of a hundred, fifty, or ten. "Let them sit as judges for the people at all times; let them bring every important case to you, but decide every minor case themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. If you do this, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people will go to their home in peace" (Exodus 18: 22- 23).

² Thomas C. Oden, Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983), 156.

This principle clearly gives guidance for the involvement of the laity within the activities of the local church. Pastors quickly wear out when each and every demand is unloaded onto them. With a number of people involved in leadership, God's grace is allowed to work through the many, and the pastor is spared excessive responsibilities. Lay preachers also benefit by being allowed to share in the blessings of ministry. At the same time, the community at large is served more adequately.

One of the secrets of a healthy church is that many do the work, not just a few. The training of lay preachers, to help in the work of the ministry, is essential for the welfare of the pastor as well as the good of the congregation and the community at large. Killinger wrote:

Proclamation is the task of a community, not merely of an individual. By the same token, the Bible, from which we derive our preaching, is a community book. The Bible is the community's book, and ministers who want to preach well must come to love it, must live in its pages day by day and year after year, until it fairly saturates their beings.³

There are still those who would question the wisdom of the above, however practical it appears. The distinction in some churches between the clergy and the laity is such that some would contend only ordained ministers should receive formal training in the proclamation of God's word. Lay preachers might be adequate to speak to young children and youth or perhaps deliver a brief testimony or devotional message, but ministry via the spoken word should be reserved for those consecrated before God for this task. Nevertheless, as a community task, all preachers whether clergy or lay are called to preach biblically.

³ Killinger, 13.

God and are enabled to respond to that word.⁴

Beyond the meaning of the term “biblical preaching” is the question, who cares whether preaching is biblical? What difference does it make if we engage in biblical preaching? The people who sit in the pews care deeply that the preaching they hear be biblical, because they want and need to be constantly hearing the good news that God was in Christ, reconciling their world to God-self.

The primary source of preaching is the Bible. It is important that the lay preachers study each text carefully before attempting to organize a sermon on it. One common mistake preachers make is that they slip into the old text the way one slips into a comfortable chair at home, saying, I know the text quite well, and I do not need to reread it, or, just skim through it rather quickly, for it is very familiar; this is not acceptable. If this is the case, a preacher will miss the treasure that is hidden there. We will not be able to see it, missing its usefulness, unless we dig hard by studying the Word. We will be missing the inspiration of fresh groundwork, of rethinking the original intention of the passage, of discovering important new connections between the text and the contemporary situation, of hearing an authentic word from God.

Preaching and Teaching God's Word

I indicated in Chapter 1 that one of the most obvious needs in the Samoan United Methodist church today is in the area of biblical preaching. Many Samoan pastors joined with other Polynesian islanders teaching, preaching, and evangelizing in New Guinea since 1883. Likewise a great many lay preachers were asked to assist pastors in teaching

⁴ William D. Thompson, Preaching Biblically: Exegesis and Interpretation (Nashville: Abingdon, 1981), 10

I indicated in Chapter 1 that one of the most obvious needs in the Samoan United Methodist church today is in the area of biblical preaching. Many Samoan pastors joined with other Polynesian islanders teaching, preaching, and evangelizing in New Guinea since 1883. Likewise a great many lay preachers were asked to assist pastors in teaching and preaching the Bible in Samoan context. Teaching and preaching are tasks that lay preachers continue to perform within the church. Teaching is one of the gifts that the servant of Christ is expected to demonstrate (2 Timothy 2:24). Timothy is instructed to teach (1 Tim 4: 11,13,16) and also to preach (2 Tim. 4: 2).

The close connection between these two activities has led some to question whether a distinction exists. It has been noted for instance, that *didasko*, the New Testament word frequently translated “teach” and *kerusso* are sometimes used interchangeably for the preaching and teaching of Jesus. Compare, for example, Matthew 4:23 with Mark 1:39 and Luke 4:44.

In Acts and the Epistles the terms are also used in close association with one another. For example, Acts 4:2 records that the religious leaders of Jerusalem were greatly disturbed that the apostles Peter and John “were teaching the people and proclaiming that in Jesus there is the resurrection of the dead.” Their activity is portrayed as being teaching as well as proclamation. Again, in Acts 15:35, “Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, and there, with many others, they taught and proclaimed the word of the Lord.” While there may be a difference between the two occupations, Luke offers no clue as to what it might be. And in a passage noted above, 2 Timothy 4:2, Paul charges Timothy to “proclaim the message” and to be ready to do so in season and out of season. In describing this proclamation Paul includes the notion of teaching.

In view of passages such as the above, many New Testament scholars have decided it is best not to insist on a distinction between the words used for preaching and teaching in the New Testament. At times they appear to be used almost synonymously. In other instances such as the 2 Timothy 4:2 passage, the term “proclaim” seems to include within it the idea of teaching. This is the conclusion of J. S. Baird who writes;

In the preaching of the apostles is found the two permanent elements of Christian preaching, evangelism and instruction. There is a free presentation to all people of the claims and demands of the gospel. There is also orderly public instruction of believers in worship based upon the Scriptures.⁵

This contrasts with the view of the English theologian, C. H. Dodd, who in the first half of this century produced his influential study relative to the Pauline teaching and Preaching of the gospel.⁶ Dodd discerned a clear difference through the entire New Testament between the primitive preaching (*kerygma*) and teaching (*didache*) of the early church. As Craig Skinner comments:

He saw the former as a simple declaration of essential gospel facts with a view to the evangelization of the hearers, and the latter as theological and ethical application of this basic for the edification of believers.⁷

More recent writers have challenged this sharp distinction in the early church or in the church today.⁸ However, Skinner brings the matter to a point in stating:

Dodd may not have intended to draw as hard a line as he did, but the overwhelming consensus of those who read him is in criticism of his extremism. Mounce sums up the contemporary view well when he says that *kerygma* is foundation and *didache* is superstructure, and that a complete building needs both. They are not mutually

⁵ J.S. Baird, “Preaching,” Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), 869

⁶ C. H. Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching and Its Development (New York: Harper and Bros., 1936), 24.

⁷ Craig Skinner, The Teaching Ministry of the Pulpit Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973), 82,83.

⁸ William H. Willimon, Integrative Preaching: The Pulpit at the Center (Nashville: Abingdon, 1981), 64-71.

from Scripture, studied in its context and applied to both the preacher and the audience.¹⁰

He stresses this resemblance by saying: “The one who preaches expository sermons is involved in teaching. No wonder Paul could twice refer to himself in a single sentence as a preacher (*kerux*), an apostle, and a teacher (*didaskolos*) (1 Timothy 2:7; 2 Timothy 1:11).”²³

In a practical sense there do seem to be several differences between the two exercises. Both should be based on careful exegesis, of course, use consistent hermeneutics, and communicate with application to the life of those who hear. But while these similarities exist, a different dynamic is at work when a Sunday school teacher instructs his or her class and a pastor preaches a portion of God’s Word in the church sanctuary. Perhaps the two exercises cannot be contrasted but they do appear to have a different emphasis. Merrill Unger, for instance, has said:

The difference therefore between teaching of the Bible and expository preaching is one of degree, rather than kind. In teaching there is a more pronounced appeal to the intellect with a larger degree of didactic or instructional element and less appeal to the emotional and volitional faculties. In preaching, however, there is a greater appeal to the emotions and the will than is proper in pure instruction. But both impart knowledge of the Bible itself, the former only more so than the latter. Moreover, both are inspirational and challenging to human conduct and action, the latter only more so than the former.¹¹

In training lay preachers to prepare and deliver biblical messages one can expect many of the opportunities they encounter to call for an emphasis on teaching rather than preaching. Instructing in Sunday school, lecturing in Adult Bible study, and leading small group studies are cases in point. Biblical messages are called for but, as Unger

¹⁰ Annan, 40.

¹¹ Annan, 41

notes above, an appeal will be made more to the intellect than the emotions. The lessons will be more didactic in nature with less appeal to volition or will.

This is not to suggest that lay preachers presenting biblical messages would make no appeal to the will or refuse to call for a commitment to change on the part of their hearers. Every Christian educator would argue that the goal of teaching is to see change in students' lives, in what the student knows, feels (values), and does (practices). A Christian education that does not effect a practical change or betterment in a student's existence is an inadequate one.

The same goal is also seen in preaching, as it seeks to bring listeners to a sense of God's role in their lives and a commitment to live before God in conformity to God's will. In the process, a call for significant change is often made. Thus, the comment has been made that "preaching is not the transmission of information, but the transformation of persons; not simply data exchange, but behavioral change."¹² Every preacher seeks to change lives and if no transformation is achieved, questions arise as to the effectiveness of the exercise.

According to Myron R. Chartier, "Effectiveness in preaching is thought to rely not only on the content and phrasing of the sermon but on the intelligence and credibility of the preacher as well. Communication is defined in terms of a linear model which involves a speaker, a message, and a listener."¹³ Few preachers would be content simply to be conveyers of information. No less can be said for Christian educators. Both desire

¹² J. Daniel Baumann, An Introduction to Contemporary Preaching (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1972), 236

¹³ Myron R. Chartier, Preaching as Communication: An Interpersonal Perspective (Nashville: Abingdon, 1981), 15.

to see change but their methods differ. Preaching seeks to forcefully convey to the listener what God is saying and makes an explicit appeal to the emotions and will.

Another area where a distinction may be observed lies in the degree of interaction that takes place between the speaker and his or her audience. In teaching, especially in smaller settings, a great deal of learning takes place via the interaction between teacher and student. It is this exchange of thought, usually through the question and answer or Socratic method that allows an instructor to determine the understanding of a student and gauge the impact of a given lesson. It also provides an excellent means by which to involve the learner, intellectually as well as emotionally.

The dialectic technique lies at the heart of effectual teaching, and is one of the great strengths and joys of a teacher. There is simply no substitute for the thrust of intellectual debate that spontaneously arises in the classroom and effectively involves even the most uninterested pupils. Preaching has no equivalent to this, though concerned pastors should make every effort to simulate this interchange of thought and opinion. Among those techniques suggested is dialogical preaching, a method that is more commonplace in the Black worship of North America but is relatively unknown in the larger Christian community.

Incidentally, communication theory has not stressed the dialogical dimension. The message delivered by a speaker has been considered more significant than the pondering of the hearer. It is now recognized that persuasive communication must sometimes be a two-way street. As Erwin Bettinghaus has pointed out, the traditional model of communication is no longer adequate. He contends that:

We must extend persuasive communication beyond this simple model.

Because we live in a pluralistic society, because we are so highly inter-dependent, the cooperation of all participants in this society is required if we are to make decisions and keep the society moving . . . It is no longer enough to look at persuasion as a one-way street, with the source actively communicating, and a receiver passively receiving.¹⁴

Dialogical preaching seeks to simulate in the pulpit a process of interchange and dialogue that happens more naturally in the classroom. While this is laudable, it does serve to highlight a difference between preaching and teaching as they are practiced today. Again the distinction is not one of contrast as noted above, but of emphasis.

The preacher today stands in proclaiming to men and women the unchanging Word of God. The Apostle Paul's words of encouragement to Timothy are as suitable today as they were then: "Proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching, 2 Timothy 4:2 (NRSV). " An exhortation to keep your sense of urgency (stand by, be at hand and ready,) whether it is convenient or inconvenient, whether it be welcome or unwelcome, you as preacher of the Word are to show people in what way their lives are wrong and convince them, rebuking and correcting, warning and urging and encouraging them being unflagging and inexhaustible in patience and teaching.

This sense of preaching as proclamation is intrinsic to the Christian pulpit. The preacher, after studying God's Word and gleaning its truths and relevancy for today, conveys that Word with power and boldness. He or she speaks, as the apostle Peter urged, "As one who utters the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11). Herald God's mind and truth he or she seeks to convince, and rebuke and exhort" (2 Timothy 4:11).

¹⁴ Erwin P. Bettinghaus, Persuasive Communication, 2nd ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), 11.

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Teaching for its part, tends to be less directive in style, with a greater emphasis on discovery for oneself. Far greater leeway is given for the hearer to request clarification, raise questions, and even disagree. Though concerned preachers today will seek to include these opportunities through feed-back groups, congregational dialogue, or after-sermon discussion times, the experience is significantly different from a classroom setting with its inductive approach.

Thus to summarize, biblical preaching and teaching though similar in principle differ in practice. The divergence is one of degree, rather than kind. Preaching appeals more to the volition and emotions, is less dialogical in style, and seeks to direct and persuade. Teaching speaks to the intellect with a greater instructional element and provides for interaction and an exchange of thought. Though the two exercises are not dissimilar they do have different emphases.

Given these distinctions, what are the implications for this project? As noted above, though many lay preachers are willing to teach God's Word, they are not comfortable with the notion of preaching. When a person is summoned to lead a

community of faith, it is expected that he or she will be able to communicate the Christian message with persuasiveness and integrity.

In addition, while the Bible gives motive, content, and inspiration for Christian preaching, the forms and rules for effective public discourse have come from the highly developed Greek and Roman rhetoric and oratory of the ancient world. It is presumed that a great deal of study and work must go into preaching and that it is best carried out by those with the training and time it requires, i. e., a pastor or professional church worker. Many writers in the field of homiletics hold this opinion, including David Buttrick who writes:

Obviously, preachers must be trained to preach... when religious experience alone qualifies preachers, congregations may be victimized by worldly wisdoms in disguise (dressed up as dark-suited piety), by too-glib certainties, and by misunderstandings of the Mystery disclosed in Jesus Christ. We are not campaigning for an intellectually elite ministry... all we are saying is that preaching does require brooding thoughtfulness as well as special study.¹⁵

It is also supposed that to preach requires a biblical “gift” and that without it, preaching can be an exercise in frustration and folly. Few lay preachers feel they possess such a gift and this further limits their willingness to preach.

Teaching, by contrast, is often deemed less demanding by those not specifically called to professional ministry. The environment of a Sunday school classroom or group meeting is less formal than a church sanctuary and often less threatening. Adults frequently find working with children less intimidating than addressing their peers and many teaching opportunities in church work provide for this. The dynamics of teaching can also appeal more to those who have not received formal training in communication or

¹⁵ David Buttrick, Homiletic: Moves and Structures (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 257.

homiletic theory, and who appreciate the emphasis teaching gives to dialogue and discovery.

All of this can make the notion of teaching more attractive than preaching for lay preachers who desire to serve God. While many church members might avoid preaching per se, they are prepared to present biblical messages in alternative environments where teaching is emphasized such as Sunday school, Bible study groups, or Adult Bible Fellowships. It is just here that a program aimed at equipping lay preachers to prepare biblical messages would have the greatest merit. What then might be the requirements for those interested in such a ministry?

Spiritual call and Growth

As it stated in the beginning, it would be presumed for instance, that those wishing to become lay preachers themselves must continue to be biblically literate. It seems right that those intending to present biblical messages should be biblically informed.

Another requirement is that of spiritual maturity. This is more difficult to gauge, but through discussion and dialogue, references from church leaders, and investigation of previous involvement in church ministries, an adequate assessment could be reached. Attendant to this are the issues of personal character and suitability of temperament especially for those wishing to work with children. For these individuals clearance would be required from the Christian Education department or Sunday school superintendent.

The issue of a specific call to ministry is also relevant. Many churches consider “being called” a prerequisite to professional pastoral ministry. Oden defines the nature of such a calling when he explains:

All believers are called to witness to the gospel, visit the sick, serve the needy, and assist in the building up of the community. This general ministry is committed to every Christian (Matthew 5: 16; 28: 18-20). Yet there are persons within the ministry of the baptized who are called of God and set apart by the whole church for the specific tasks of an ordered ministry. Ordained ministry is different from the general ministry of the laity in that one is duly called, prepared, examined, ordained, and authorized to a representative ministry on behalf of the whole people (laos) of God.¹⁶

Lay preachers desiring to minister through the proclamation of God’s Word would be required to have a sense of such a unique and distinctive call. Such a responsibility requires that those who intend to pursue this ministry be fully assured of God’s leading. Often, a word or deed from a caring Sunday school teacher or group leader has been the catalyst for spiritual growth or Christian service in the lives of students. The accountability involved is enormous and cannot be entered into lightly.

The Gift of Preaching and Teaching

While preaching is never referred to specifically in scripture as a spiritual gift (*charisma*), there are several instances where it seems implied. Paul speaks of himself as being appointed by God a herald and an apostle, a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. (1 Timothy 2:7). This would seem to place preaching in the same category as the gift-role of apostle and teacher. In the context of the previous verse, the gift is seen in the reading of scripture in preaching, and in teaching.

¹⁶ Thomas Oden, Pastoral Theology (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983), 26.

From these references, it might well be concluded that there is a spiritual gift of preaching that can be listed beside other gifts. As Nelson Annan notes:

Some might argue that since preaching and teaching seem to almost totally overlap in the New Testament, the gifts of preaching and teaching are equivalent. Or it might be argued that the gift of preaching is subsumed under the several gifts of prophecy, teaching, exhortation, etc.¹⁷

When discussing teaching (*didasko*) however, no need for inference is required. The New Testament clearly indicates that teaching is one of the gifts given by and distributed through the Holy Spirit “who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses” (1 Corinthians 12:11).

Ephesians 4:11 declared, “The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers.” Romans 12:6, “We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us.” The apostle Paul then goes on to list as one of those, “the teacher, in teaching” (Romans 12:7). Everett Harrison comments on the nature of the gift:

The gift of teaching... differed from prophesying in that it was not characterized by ecstatic utterance as the vehicle for revelation given by the Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 14:6 teaching is paired with knowledge, whereas prophecy is coupled with revelation. Probably the aim in teaching was to give help in the area of Christian living rather than formal instruction in doctrine; even though it must be granted the latter is needed as a foundation for the former.¹⁸

Spiritual giftedness should also be appraised informally. Though it is not possible to stereotype a gifted teacher, there are some common attitudes and passions to look for that lie at the heart of what it means to be gifted by the Holy Spirit to teach. Included among these should be a heart for people. Without an interest in people and a belief that

¹⁷ Annan, 44

¹⁸ Everett Harrison, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: The Zondervan Corporation, 1976), 131.

what is being taught has some enduring value, teaching can become a hollow, vain exercise. This is especially critical in the proclamation of God's Word, for students receive little encouragement from our society to pursue biblical studies. An enthusiastic, positive attitude towards students and their studies will do much to motivate them.

There also needs to be enthusiasm for the subject. An effective communicator must believe in the importance of the topic he or she is presenting. Without this, a note of insincerity is sounded which listeners are quick to discern. It is asserted in pedagogy that great teachers teach themselves. Without an abundant confidence in the merit and relevance of God's Word, no lay preacher can hope to be effective in the proclamation of biblical messages. The apostle Paul in his letter to the Thessalonians alludes to this saying, "... when you received the word of God that you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as what it really is, God's word, which is also at work in you believers" (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

Wilhoit and Ryken mention several other indicators of giftedness in teaching.¹⁹ There should be a passion to share what the teacher has learned, for instance. While many people are content to master a field for their own benefit, the teacher will not be satisfied until the knowledge gained has been enthusiastically shared with others. There should also be a passion for application. As noted earlier, the goal of teaching, as it is for preaching, is to see lives changed as students are brought to an understanding of God's leading and will for their lives. This cannot take place unless the teacher finds some way to apply the lesson to the here and now, demonstrating how it can be implemented.

¹⁹ Wilhoit and Ryken, 68-71.

Finally, there must be a passion for God. To present biblical messages without a sound knowledge of the true author lacks credibility. It is clear that a preacher or teacher cannot lead people beyond his or her own position. So Paul could write, “Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us” (Philippians 3:17).

Together these attributes form a composite of an individual gifted in teaching and are essential if effective ministry is to occur. Wilhoit and Ryken noted:

The passions of the teacher are essential for effective Bible teaching. In general we do not hear enough about them in discussions of teaching. Yet they are one of the best yardsticks by which to measure a teacher’s adequacy or inadequacy. When judged by that yardstick, many teachers need to reconsider their current practices as teachers, and perhaps whether they should be teaching at all. Conversely, this same list of qualifications should encourage people who do not currently teach to get into the act, since they obviously possess the right traits and abilities.²⁰

²⁰ Wilhoit and Ryken, 71.

Chapter 3

THE BIBLE AS A RESOURCE FOR PREACHING

Key Principles in Development of Effective Biblical Messages.

It would be helpful to mention some of the key principles that lie behind the development of effective biblical messages.

The first is the need to gain a solid understanding of the scriptures being considered, which in turn will depend on good exegesis and hermeneutics. The purpose of the exegesis is to identify the otherness of the biblical text and topic. Having decided on a text or topic, relevant biblical passages need to be explored and fully understood. “Hermeneutic” comes from a Greek term that means, “to interpret.” According to Allen, in preaching, hermeneutics refers to the process whereby the preacher moves from the meaning of a text or topic in the past to the meaning for today’s community.¹ This process makes it possible to bring the authority of God’s Word to the present. The text or texts are carefully examined in order to discern precisely what is being said.²

In preaching, it is possible to prepare a variety of biblical sermons including those, which are topical, textual, or expository in nature. Though expository sermons are those most clearly designed for an exposition of God’s Word, one can also preach topical and textual sermons that are thoroughly biblical. So lay preachers desiring to prepare

¹ Ronald J. Allen, *Preaching: An Essential Guide* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 59.

² For an excellent discussion of the threefold process in biblical study involving observation, interpretation, and application, see Howard B. Hendricks and William D. Hendricks, *Living by the Book* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991).

biblical messages regardless of the form, must base them on a clear understanding and use of relevant scriptures.

In the process, the main idea or exegetical idea of the passage will be revealed. Haddon Robinson notes that this is determined by first finding the subject of a passage (what the passage is talking about).³ When these are combined, the exegetical idea what the passage is essentially about can be conclusively determined.

A second principle involves the realm of interpretation. Having discovered what the applicable scriptures say, the task now becomes one of discovering what they meant to the original readers and what they mean to us today. Without this, the teacher can present factual knowledge but it will lack relevancy for modern hearers. This will involve an analysis of the exegetical idea in which it is subjected to three developmental questions – What does this mean? Is it true? What difference does it make?

This in turn will lead to the formulation of the main idea of the message being prepared, corresponding to the homiletic idea in preaching. This constitutes the heart of the preparation of biblical messages and is the point at which many speakers fail. It has been observed that one of the most common complaints about sermons by churchgoers is that they contain too many ideas. In fact, as Haddon Robinson has noted, sermons more often fail because they deal with unrelated ideas.⁴ The same is true for biblical messages in general. The reason many lack impact is because they do not have a main idea or focus around which the lesson is built.

Lay preachers preparing to give biblical messages typically begin by gleaning from scripture the facts about the topic, character, or passage they intend to cover.

³ Haddon W. Robinson, Biblical Preaching (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), 66-70.

⁴ Robinson, 33.

Marshalling their data, they organize it in some logical manner and then present it with some form of commentary. Often there is no attempt made to demonstrate how the different thoughts fit together. The hearers are left wondering what the point of the talk was and uncertain about the biblical message delivered.

The problem is that many lay preachers do not realize the importance of isolating a summary statement or main idea of what they are trying to say and building their message around it. Without this pivotal concept it is impossible to communicate a biblical message, for none is being given. Duane Litfin comments:

There exists a remarkable consensus among those who have studied and practice of public speaking over the last twenty-five hundred years that the most effective way to structure a speech is to build it around a single significant thought. From the ancient Greek and Roman rhetoricians to the latest Bible to the sermons heard in pulpits today, from the political oratory of democracies long past to the persuasive messages of our own times, the history of public speaking and the lessons we have learned from that history unite to argue forcefully that a speech, to be maximally effective, ought to attempt to develop more or less fully only one major proposition.⁵

He goes on to note that the reason for this consensus stems from the need within the human mind for unity, order, and progress. Having a central idea allows us to produce a finished product that ... "hangs together and carries a unified communicative thrust."⁶ Formulating a main idea would do much to improve the presentations of many lay preachers. Teaching, like preaching, suffers when no main idea is present, for the point of the presentation is lost.

A third principal involves the area of application. The world of the Bible often seems remote and distant from our own. Laws concerning the people of Israel and

⁵ Litfin, 74.

⁶ Litfin, 76.

accounts of their exploits belong to the ancient past. Even the names of places and characters accentuate the strangeness we feel as we read the scriptures. A major challenge that faces every lay preacher who desires to present biblical messages lies in making the Bible accessible to modern hearers and showing how its message relates specifically to people today.

While this might seem obvious to the Christian who regularly reads and assimilates the teachings of God's Word, it is far from evident to many in the culture around us. In his book, Between Two Worlds, John Stott recounts a conversation he had with two brothers attending university. Though raised in a traditional Christian home both had renounced their parents' faith. When Stott inquired as to why, he was amazed to discover that it was not because the brothers questioned the truth of Christianity but its relevance. He writes:

“What we want to know,” they went on, “is not whether Christianity is true, but whether it's relevant. And frankly we don't see how it can be. Christianity was born two millennia ago in a first century Palestinian culture. What can an ancient religion of the Middle East say to us who live in the exciting, kaleidoscopic world of the end of the twentieth century...? What possible relevance can a primitive Palestinian religion have for us?”⁷

Stott remarks that nothing brought home so forcefully to him as did this, the gulf in which people are sense between the Bible and themselves; and so we know the challenged which confronts Christian preachers today.

The same can be said for every Christian communicator, whatever the setting. Our postmodern culture is quickly distancing itself from the vestiges of a Christian

⁷ John Stott, Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1982), 138-39.

worldview. Biblical communicators can no longer assume that hearers will be interested in messages whose contents reflect biblical teachings.

Even amongst Christians, speakers not relevant in their presentations will find themselves ineffective. Henri Nouwen speaks to this when he comments:

In order to bring any kind of message to people there has to be at least the willingness to accept the message. This willingness means some desire to listen, some question that asks for an answer, or some general feeling of uncertainty that needs clarification or understanding. But whenever an answer is given when there is no question, support is offered when there is no need, or an idea is given when there is no desire to know, the only possible effect can be irritation or plain indifference.⁸

An important essay on the subject is Krister Stendahl's article on contemporary theology in The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible. Stendahl believes that in modern theology these two questions have often been in competition. Thus, scholars who have done the most in terms of discovering what the Bible meant in its original context have been inclined to cut the Bible off from contemporary relevance. On the other hand, those who have tried to demonstrate the relevance of the scriptures to modern life have been indifferent to the need of accurately reflecting the meaning inherent in the biblical text.⁹

This has meant that some teachers may relate what they have learned about the background of a passage without adequately tackling the question of how the passage relates to contemporary concerns. Others may do an inadequate job of correlating their teaching with the scriptures. In his book on Sunday school teaching, Ray Rozell recounts how this imbalance is seen in practice. He writes:

I came across one teacher who said he always used what he called the "historical approach method." Have you ever come across that? As he

⁸ Henri J. M. Nouwen, Creative Ministry (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1978), 25.

⁹ Krister Stendahl, The Way to Biblical Preaching (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1957), 96-97.

explained the method to me it worked out like this: no matter what the subject of the lesson might be, he dug up all of the ancient history he could by any stretch of the imagination relate to the theme. Then he spent about twenty-five minutes getting off the results of his historical research on the class and about five minutes on the lesson! He would do it even if the lesson were on the New Birth! I looked into the matter pretty carefully and I discovered that after twenty years of this he had learned a good deal of history and some Bible. His pupils had not learned much of either one!¹⁰

How then can one relate the biblical message with relevance? Having determined the main idea involved, the next task lies in deciding what the purpose should be, that is, what one expects to happen in the hearer as a result of listening to the presentation. In preaching, one must ask the question, “Why am I preaching this sermon?” The same applies to lay preachers presenting biblical messages. Without a definite purpose in mind, there is little point in speaking, for few results will be seen. As Arnell Motz comments:

The task of the preacher is to hold in his right hand the truth of Scripture and the purpose that it wants to accomplish in our lives and in his left hand the needs of the congregation as he perceives them, and then somehow bring the two together in a message that they sense is, not only from the Word of God, but a word from God.¹¹

In the same way, every biblical communicator is called on to bring to his or her hearers a message that applies to their lives. For the biblical communicator content should never be an end in itself. There must be application if life change is to be seen.

These concepts of observation, interpretation, and application, make up the key principles in the preparation of biblical messages and will be used as a template in the curriculum of chapter four and five.

¹⁰ Ray Rozell, Talks on Sunday School Teaching (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1956), 61.

¹¹ Motz, 81.

The Need for Preparation of Biblical Message.

The theory behind this project is that lay preachers trained in the preparation of biblical messages will be able to effectively communicate God's Word to our culture. This applies especially to lay preachers who need to be equipped to preach and who are open to preparing and presenting biblical messages. If lay preachers are to effectively communicate they must be trained. This applies especially in the culture of our day where a high degree of professionalism has come to be expected. Because of their considerable exposure to modern media many in the west today have expectations for communicators that past generations did not. Those presenting biblical messages must be aware of those standards. Audience expectations therefore make training mandatory.

In addition, the Word of God must be handled in an appropriate manner. Paul writing to Timothy exhorts him to "Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 1:13). He was to be careful in his use and exposition of God's Word. Elsewhere he exhorts him to; "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved by him, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). It is not adequate to present the Word of God in a haphazard fashion. Those who would stand before people and claim to present God's Word need to do so with authority and confidence that they are accurately reflecting the truth it contains. Though formal training is no guarantee of this, it can be of great help.

Both Timothy (2 Timothy 2:2) and Titus (Titus 1:9) were urged by the apostle Paul to seek out men who would faithfully convey the Word of God to others. Over the

generations this has been accomplished in a variety of ways including proclamation, worship, pastoral care, and deliberate efforts at Christian education such as catechesis.¹²³⁰

Today however, more than ever, there is a need to train teachers who can not only understand and interpret God's Word but who can effectively present it to this generation. Old methods may not be sufficient. Renewed efforts at effectiveness and relevancy in biblical proclamation must be pursued. As Oden notes:

Pastors often are shocked at the number of their parishioners who do not know the difference between Genesis and Revelation, or between Peter and Paul. Yet seldom do we attribute this deficit to a failure of pastoral initiative over several generations. The continuing presence of a biblically unschooled laity serves as evidence that Christian education has stumbled, if not collapsed entirely, in our time, despite bold hopes and brave assurances.¹³

It is anticipated that the training of lay preachers in the preparation of biblical messages will improve the situation.

Introduction to the Preparation of Biblical Messages

As I ponder this project two things occupy my mind. First, how can lay preachers be trained in the preparation of biblical messages? Second, how can they effectively communicate God's Word to the Samoans and to the whole church?

A lay preacher is expected to be knowledgeable in gathering all materials necessary for producing a good sermon. The Samoan *tulafale* (orator) takes his task with wisdom and a careful plan of preparation. He must understand the steps and structures of

¹² Richard Baxter, The Reformed Pastor (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1829), 23.

¹³ Oden, 141.

a Samoan speech. Evidently, a lay preacher should plan his sermons being careful to organize and outline a good sermon. Why? Because a Christian lay preacher and *tulafale* orator present two different views, i. e., the lay preacher received his/her calling from God, and the orator represents a culture. The lay preacher's calling should not be taken lightly, however, because lay preachers are expected to be ambassadors of God's word.

The duties of a lay preacher are not to be taken lightly; one must devote enough time studying the scripture. In Samoa, the term *lauga* (sermon) is used in a wide range of meanings. For instance, it not only covers traditional oratorical performances of all kinds but also is expository in nature. The typical Samoan *tulafale* (orator) must possess a general understanding of the structure of a speech. He or she must be able to understand the logic, which will enable him or her to balance speech and to present his/her thought in an orderly way. He/she must understand the oratory language, which will give the correct meaning of the words used in the speech. His knowledge of history will enable him to understand the culture in its setting in island events. The first great task of a lay preacher is to know, understand, and explain what the Scriptures teach. The orations of a Samoan *tulafale* represent all the power of the people in their protocols, and even their addresses, known as *fa'alupega*. Whenever a leading orator is about to deliver his speech, he doesn't just represent *himself*. He speaks on behalf of his extended family if it is a family occasion, or he is the spokesperson for the village if it is a village occasion. In some cases, a leading orator of the district (*itumalo*) will have to speak on behalf of all the villages of a traditional district if it is a district occasion. When the *tulafale* speaks, he takes upon him a task to represent everyone, even the village well. With *mana*

(power) and the heart to promote excellence in his delivery the *lauga* is part of the Samoan traditional spirituality.

The highest chief, Malietoa Vainu'upo, in the years 1830 to 1835 decided to make this offer to the leaders of the churches brought by the first missionaries. He proposed that the *fa'asamoa* (Samoan way of life), and all aspects of the chiefly cultures and traditions, would be offered as a *tautua* (service) to the God of his newly formed kingdom and all his people. By that he did not mean that the Church or churches would rule all Samoa, but that the *matai* (chiefs) and their administrations in all villages of the Samoan group would use their *mana* (power) to further the work of the Lord that was represented by the missionaries of the time. He extended this offer to all future pastors who would be carrying out the important mission of Jesus Christ, the Savior.

By way of introduction therefore it would be helpful to review the types of messages that are possible and briefly review the advantage of expository presentations within our culture. The first consideration for those hoping to proclaim a biblical message is to ensure that its basis is thoroughly biblical. The passage from which you preach serves as your authoritative source of truth. Numerous texts and topics are available, of course, but the man or woman who speaks for God first must determine the purpose for speaking. For example, it may be with evangelism in mind. When people gather for a function to which a lay preacher is invited to speak, it is important that the claim of the gospel be fully and clearly articulated.

A second purpose for speaking rests in the area of enlightening and strengthening those who are already believers. This was the thrust of Paul's charge to Timothy when he urged him in his preaching to "correct, rebuke, and encourage with great patience and

careful instruction.” (2 Timothy 4:2). When Christians are gathered to encourage one another, this is a beneficial strategy.

A third purpose in speaking would be to equip Christians for service. This is reflected in the teaching of the apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:11-16; “It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining the whole measure of the fullness of Christ . . . from Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work”(NIV). Pastors and teachers are not given to the church to accomplish its work but principally to equip people, “for the work of the ministry.” Building up believers is never meant as an end in itself. Subsequently they should be able, in turn to evangelize, edify, and equip others.

In deciding on the purpose behind the message, one must next determine what type of message will be given. As I noticed in many times within the Samoan traditional preaching, messages cover personal testimonies, topical presentations, and biblical expositions of given texts. Allen mentioned:

One of the early steps in sermon preparation is to choose whether to preach an expository or topical sermon. On what basis does the preacher decide? This choice is rooted in two things: the comparative strengths and weaknesses of preaching from a text or topic, and the situation of the congregation. The preacher selects an approach to the sermon in the hope it will correlate with congregational context.¹⁴

If a personal testimony is to be used, the emphasis is upon the work of Christ in the speaker’s life. This can be extremely effective both as an evangelistic tool and as an

¹⁴ Allen, 29.

encouragement to Christians. Topical preaching can be very useful however, “when the preacher starts with a topic that is important to the congregation.”¹⁵

Topical messages isolate specific subjects either in the world around us or from scripture itself, and address these from a Christian perspective. Depending on the nature of the event, subjects might include doctrine, theology, Christian practice, or questions of ethics or morality, lifestyle issues, or social issues.

In addition to the above, a biblical message may consist of an exposition of a passage of scripture. A working definition of biblical exposition is the communication of a biblical truth (which is derived from and transmitted through a study of a passage of scripture) in such a way that the audience is able to see its relevance for their lives.¹⁶

Walter Liefeld in his text *New Testament Exposition* says:

The essential *nature* of expository preaching is preaching that explains a passage in such a way as to lead the congregation to a true and practical application of that passage.

He goes on to list the main qualities of an expository message and notes it:

1. Deals with one basic passage of Scripture. References to other Scriptures are always directly relevant to, illustrative of and supportive of the teaching of the passage at hand.
2. Has hermeneutical integrity – i.e., the same balance and intention as the original author and does not omit or distort any essential of the message of that text.
3. Has cohesion. It is not a string of gems from exegetical insights but something that fits together as a usable whole.
4. Has movement and direction. It is not enough to just deal with the elements of the passage. The hearer must be moved to a challenge and in the direction intended by the biblical author.
5. Has application. Without application it is only exposition. It is information, not a message.¹⁷

¹⁵ Allen, 30.

¹⁶ Litfin, 332.

¹⁷ Walter L. Liefeld, *New Testament Exposition: From Text to Sermon* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 6.

To define expository messages we can note that there are definite advantages to their use. For instance, as noted, the theme of the message, its divisions, and its supporting material are developed from the passage itself. In addition, the audience is taught through a study of the text itself. In this way they have a direct experience with scripture. The speaker singles out a text and then leads the audience through it.

Expository messages also include personal application. Teaching content as an end in itself is not adequate. Without clear application a message cannot hope to be evangelistic, edifying, or equipping. Thus, the ultimate purpose of delivering the message in the first place will be defeated.

In view of the benefits of expository messages, the remainder of this project will deal with their preparation. Though other types of messages can be used, an expository style serves well as any speaker's fundamental method. Once it is developed and can be used with confidence, other types can be employed with profit.

Chapter 4

DEVELOPMENT OF SERMON STRUCTURES

The First Step: Selection and Study of a Text.

The first consideration for those hoping to proclaim a biblical message then, is to select a portion of scripture in keeping with the purpose or topic at hand. It is vital to ensure that the passage chosen represents a complete unit of thought or pericope. A pericope refers to portion of Scripture read in public worship. Contained within it will be a central idea which sets the passage apart from others around it and which the expositor will attempt to isolate. Whether the portion chosen is from a psalm, an epistle, a narrative, or a parable, it must represent some unit of biblical thought.

In the New Testament this means that paragraph divisions may be helpful in defining blocks of thought. It must be kept in mind however, that these divisions are not always in the best places. Editors have put them there in the past attempting to mark out appropriate segments. It would be wise, therefore, to compare a variety of translations and search for the writer's ideas for oneself when seeking a passage from which to speak. Paragraph divisions, though helpful, are not the only indicators of speaking portions.

Having chosen a text the next step is to study it. This corresponds to the observation stage mentioned above. The idea here is to gather as much as possible to determine what the original writer intended. This is known as *exegesis*, a word derived from the Greek *exegeomai*. The basic meaning is "to lead or bring out" and the intent is to understand the original meaning of the text within its historical context. John Calvin said several centuries ago in his commentary on Galatians:

Let us know, then, that the true meaning of Scripture is the natural and obvious meaning; and let us embrace and abide by it resolutely. Let us not only neglect as doubtful, but boldly set aside as deadly corruptions, those pretended expositions which lead us away from the natural meaning.¹

Initially, it is important to read and reread the passage as often as possible in a variety of translations. This will give a sense of the text's general intent. If knowledge of Hebrew or Greek is lacking, much help can be found in using an interlinear Bible with a competent translation of the original text.² A thorough examination of the historical context of the passage should uncover facts about the writer, readers, customs of the day, and other aspects that would help to add color and perspective to the study. Bible dictionaries, encyclopedias, commentaries, concordances, and a good atlas would be useful at this point.³

As the study continues, notes should be kept and the most important features written down. In the process, a general idea should be sought as to what the writer is talking about, what is the subject, and what is being said about it. Much of the content of the message being prepared will be disclosed at this juncture so a careful approach is mandatory.

The Second Step: Interpretation.

This leads to the second step of message preparation and interpretation. In the process certain underlying principles of interpreting the Scripture will need to be

¹ William D. Thompson, Preaching Biblically: Exegesis and Interpretation (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981), 37.

² Jay P. Green, Sr., ed., The Interlinear Hebrew-Greek-English Bible 2nd ed., (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1985), 85.

³ James Strong, The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible (Iowa Falls, IA: Riverside Book and Bible House, 1975), 19.

followed. These principles constitute both a hermeneutical system—a theoretical rationale—and a series of practical questions that can be put to a passage of Scripture. Their ultimate purpose is not to understand a book, but to understand the human situation our listeners bring to the hearing of the Word and to enable them to respond to the gospel---the gracious, saving Word that is at the center of the Scripture.”⁴

The Third Step: Finding and Analyzing the Exegetical idea.

As it was noted above as study of a text is undertaken, two essential exegetical questions must be addressed. These relate to the subject and the complement of the text.

When it comes to the Bible, the subject is the precise, complete answer to the question, “What is the biblical writer talking about?” This should be stated in a complete phrase or clause as opposed to a single word. An exact description of what the passage is talking about is required, so it must not be too narrow or too broad. The subject must fit the details of the text while the text’s particulars must be reflected in the subject.

To aid in this task a number of questions can be applied to the proposed subject beginning with the words, who, what, where, when, and how. By doing this it can help make the subject more exact. For instance, Proverbs 22:1 states: “A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, and favor is better than silver or gold.” A cursory analysis reveals that the passage deals with a “good name” or “reputation.” However, reputation is too broad a subject. A more precise rendering might be the value of a good reputation.

⁴ Thompson, 46.

The complement answers to the question, “What is being said about the subject?” Often the complement becomes obvious once the subject has been stated. In the above example the complement to, “What is the value of a good reputation” would be, “It is more valuable than material riches.”

Sometimes there will be more than one complement for a subject. Though it is best to identify a single complement if possible, there are texts where multiple complements are provided. An example would be “Wherefore, my beloved brother, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath” (James 1:19). In this case the subject, “What should characterize all Christians,” has several complements: they should be (1) quick to hear, (2) slow to speak, and (3) slow to anger.

After the exegetical idea is discovered it must next be analyzed. The exegete must ascertain how the biblical writer developed the idea for the writer’s original audience.

In conclusion therefore, knowing the original author’s main idea and the ways in which the idea was developed will help the exegete in later determining his or her own message and purpose when speaking from the same text.

The Fourth Step: Audience Analysis and the Message Idea.

The preacher identifies selects and studies the biblical text, analyzes the ideas, images, or metaphors, and at the same time he or she analyses the audience. “All scripture is profitable,” according to 2 Timothy 3:16, “for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” What needs therefore are being addressed

by this passage? At what point does the truth of this text touch the lives of those to whom the message will be given?

To begin this process, the developmental questions, which were initially addressed to the text, must now be directed at the audience. It may be that the need will be for explanation. The biblical writer may have explained a truth to an audience in the 1st century, which contemporary listeners will not fully grasp. Or the writer may have assumed a truth, which modern audiences would struggle to comprehend. An example would be “The Armor of God” found in Ephesians 6:10-20. In addressing this need the question of “What does this mean?” will be considered.

Then again, the author may have proved something in the text, which a congregation of today would not accept. The question to be dealt with will be, “Is this true?” An example would be the resurrection of Christ from the dead, from 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. Many outside the church do not accept this pivotal truth of the Christian faith. Explaining its significance to an indifferent audience would be inadequate if their need was first for proof.

On the other hand, an audience’s need might be for application. Though they understand the biblical idea and accept its validity, they struggle with its relevance. An example would be Psalm 91. Though many would understand and accept that God’s care and protection exist for the believer, the question arises, so what? What difference does it make? In this case the audience’s need will not be in the area of explanation or proof so much as application.

Obviously, a number of these questions will surface in the course of preparing a message. Details must be explained, proof will often be required, and application is

mandatory. But one need often predominates and dictates the form the message will eventually take. Thus the importance of determining beforehand the manner in which the biblical writer developed the exegetical idea for his audience is critical.

The stage is now set for determining the central idea for the message. This will always be a combination of two components: (a) the exegetical idea combined with (b) the needs of the audience. As Duane Litfin notes;

It is as if these two factors represented two lines plotted on a chart. The point at which the lines intersect represents your speech idea.⁵

The speech or message idea represents the central proposition the message seeks to convey. In biblical messages the theme is a biblical concept based on sound exegesis and an analysis of audience need. As Robinson notes:

Ideally each sermon (message) should be the explanation, interpretation, or application of a single dominant idea supported by other ideas, all drawn from one passage or several passages of Scripture.⁶

There are several ways to move from the exegetical idea to the message idea. First, when an idea is a universal principle, applying to anyone at any time, the statement of the message idea can be identical to the exegetical idea. For instance, Proverbs 17:25 states, "A foolish son is a grief to his father and bitterness to her that bare him." In this case the exegetical idea and the message idea are basically the same. The fact that the original statement was addressed to ancient Hebrews, whereas the message will be delivered to a contemporary audience, is of little concern.

⁵ Litfin, 340.

⁶ Robinson, 33.

A second way to move from the exegetical idea to the message idea is by making it more precise, specific and personal. The exegetical idea in 1 Timothy 4: 12-16 could be: “Paul urged Timothy to gain respect for his youth by being an example in his actions and character and by faithfully proclaiming the Word of God.” A message idea based on this passage could state: “Young Christians obtain respect through personal example and faithful public ministry.”

Third, the message idea sometimes captures the universal principle behind the specific situation in the biblical setting. It then restates it so as to relate to a specific contemporary situation faced by a modern audience. In 1 Corinthians 8 for instance, Paul discusses how his readers should deal with meat sacrificed to idols in a way that will not offend fellow Christians. In this case the exegetical idea would refer to a particular cultural problem of the day: meat offered to idols.

Though western Christians of today do not face this issue they regularly deal with the broader principle behind it: how to deal with questionable matters. A modern rendering might be: ‘when dealing with morally neutral matters, be flexible in love.’ In this case the exegetical idea and the message idea are different but closely related. The exegetical idea is concerned with meat offered to idols while the message idea brings together the principle in the text as well as the needs of the contemporary audience. In this way the principle remains the same but the message expresses it in a relevant manner for today.

Moving from the exegetical idea to the message idea is a critical procedure and must be done with care. The authority and integrity of the message are at stake. The focus shifts here from the idea the author was communicating to his original audience to

the idea the speaker will convey to his or her audience. To remain biblical there must be a clear correlation between the two.

It should also be noted that in stating the message idea it is helpful to use language that is winsome and appealing. The idea being communicated to the audience should be clear and memorably stated without being sensational. Its truth should be relevant to the audience's needs while being thoroughly biblical. Once it is formulated, the speaker will have the message he or she will present.

The Fifth Step: Message Purpose and Form.

With the message idea in hand the next step lies in determining what the truth of the idea should accomplish. This will be the purpose of the message. A purpose statement is the explicit wording of the desired results in the audience's lives, expressed in clear, measurable terms. The message should accomplish something. The purpose statement indicates what that will be. Whole books as well as portions within them were written to effect changes in the thinking and actions of readers. An expository message must align itself with that original purpose.

In 2 Timothy 3: 17 notes that Scripture was given so that we might be "complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." This happens, according to verse 16, through the teaching of biblical doctrine, the reproof and conviction of sin, the correction of error and the instruction of people in God's ways. But to be effective, a purpose statement should describe the specific, observable behavior that will come as result of the message proclaimed. A speaker must define exactly what change in understanding, belief, or

action he or she hopes will take place in the lives of people. If this cannot be done, the purpose is too vague.

With a clear purpose in mind the speaker must now attend to the form of the message. Usually a message will consist of an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. The message form determines what goes into each of these segments. To determine it, two key variables must be considered: (1) the original text and (2) the contemporary audience.

Earlier, in analyzing the exegetical idea, the manner in which the biblical writer developed the idea for his audience was noted. In keeping with the three developmental questions, he may have explained his idea to his audience, proved it or applied it. It is important to note which was done, because in an expository message, one teaches a passage of scripture, not just the idea that has been derived from it. That is why the message idea must not only be drawn from, but also communicated through, a study of the passage in its context. The manner in which the original author developed his idea will influence a message's form.

But in addition, the development questions were directed toward the modern audience. What would they require in the message to be explained, proved, or applied? Often one need predominates in keeping with the development of the idea in the text.

For instance, a message can take the form of an idea to be explained. The message idea is stated in the introduction, taken apart and analyzed in the body, and repeated in the conclusion. The message can also be a proposition proved. The message idea appears in the introduction as a proposition the speaker will defend. The points of the message then become reasons or proofs for the idea. The message might also take the

form of a principle applied. A biblical principle is laid down in the introduction and the rest of the message explores its implications.

It should be noted that all of the above are deductive in their development. That is, the message idea appears as part of the introduction; the body of the message then explains, proves, or applies it. They thus proceed from the general to the particular, the theme to specific points. This allows the point of the message to be clear from the outset and aids in comprehension, as the audience knows from the outset where the message is going.

However, messages can also proceed inductively. In the introduction, only the first sequence of the message is given. Succeeding sequences are developed throughout the body until the main idea emerges in the conclusion. It thus moves from the particular to the general, a specific point to an overall theme. The advantage of inductive development is that it can more easily hold an audience's interest. It produces a sense of discovery and conveys the impression that the main idea of the message has been arrived at by the audience itself.

Each of the above forms offers a way to develop the message. As noted, the one finally chosen will depend on the manner in which the original author developed his exegetical idea, and also the needs of the contemporary audience.

Message Outlines.

Having decided how the main idea must be developed to accomplish the intended purpose the next step is to develop an outline. This will provide a blueprint that displays in detail the final appearance of the message. An outline serves a number of purposes:

1. It clarifies the relationships between the parts or segments of the message.
2. It allows the speaker to view the message as a whole and to gain a sense of its unity.
3. It allows the speaker to note the order of ideas to ensure there is an appropriate progression.
4. It points out the balance between points and whether one section needs more development or additional supporting material.

To begin the outline, the main points of the message must first be decided on. Not all points will have equal importance. Those that are basic will make up the framework around which the message is constructed. While it may seem expedient to forego the process, failure to produce a workable outline will result in much time lost later. The outline is essential to provide a guideline of the shape and direction of the message. Since each point in the outline represents an idea, it should be a grammatically complete sentence. Words or phrases, which stand as points, are too vague and incomplete.

Transitional and Supporting Material.

With the message outline ready, the next step involves the preparation of transitional statements for questions. These move the audience from one point of the message into the next. They are particularly significant because they indicate the relationships of the parts of the message to the whole. Without effective transitions the audience can become confused, for they will have little idea of where the message is going.

Transitions should be written in advance and can take a number of forms. For instance, they can review the previous point and state the following idea: "Not only did the Lord defeat sin on the cross but He also opened the way for us to God." If the previous point has been stated adequately the transition can omit the review: "But the Lord accomplished something else on the cross; He also opened the way for us to God." Or a question can be asked: "But was the defeat of sin all that the Lord accomplished on the cross?"

Whatever is used, it is important to remember that transitions serve as guides for the audience and as such assume a great deal of importance. They may review where they have been, indicate where they are going, relate what was said to the main subject or idea, or interest the hearer in the next thought. They show how the points of the message relate to one another as well as to the introduction and conclusion. They demonstrate why the points of the message are given in a particular order. Little will confuse an audience faster than inadequate or incomplete transitions.

Once the message outline and transitional statements are prepared, the way is now clear to fill in the outline with supporting material. This is the material that actually explains, proves or applies the message idea. Various means are available and include the following:

Restatement: this uses the principle of redundancy to state an idea “in other words,” for the purpose of clarity and emphasis.

Explanation and Definition: set limits and boundaries on the points being made. They may also amplify on how ideas relate to one another or what an idea implies.

Factual data: consists of observations, examples, statistics, and other information that can be verified apart from the speaker.

Quotations: can be used to impress an audience or to establish authority. They can be employed when someone has stated the idea more effectively than we can.

Narration: within a message describes the individuals and events discussed in Biblical accounts. It can supply background by filling in the history, setting, or personalities involved.

Illustrations: render truth believable. They help memory, stir emotions, create need, held attention, clarify issues, and bring abstract concepts down to earth.

Introductions and Conclusion.

With the message outline completed, attention should now be directed towards the introduction. Knowing what is to be said to the audience from the passage, the way is clear to decide on how it should be introduced. Introductions have significance out of proportion to their length. It is insufficient to assume that the audience will automatically

be interested in the subject to be discussed. To gain a hearing, the speaker must make every effort to secure and hold attention within the first minute or two of the presentation.

This is why the introduction is so critical.

Thus the first requirement of a good introduction is that it gains the audience's attention. To do this, the speaker must go after the hearers' minds to force them to listen. He or she may start with a paradox: "In the Christian life, the way up is down, and the way down, is up!"

A challenge to quiet assumptions may be used that forces the listener to question things often taken for granted. For example, "Faith moves mountains. We say that, we believe that, we assume that; or do we? When things are going well for us it is an easy belief to hold. But when things go wrong, when a friend is sick in the hospital for instance, and her only hope lies in what God will do, do we still believe that faith moves mountains? Can we still hold that conviction with such easy assurance?"

Rhetorical questions can quickly gain attention: "If it became a crime to be a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?"

A startling fact or statistic gets an audience to listen: "Christian young people face tremendous pressures in our world. And by all accounts they are not doing well in dealing with them. According to statistics, Christian teenagers are involved in premarital sex almost as much as non-Christian youth."

At times, a compelling quotation can arrest the listener: "Billy Graham has said that there are three keys to the success and effectiveness of his ministry. They are prayer, prayer, and prayer."

Humor can awaken an indifferent congregation: “Once upon a time there was a man who said to a maid, “Will you marry me?” She answered, “No.” And they lived happily ever after!”

Stories easily garner attention because people are interested in people: “John Thompson was a mild-mannered office clerk with no thoughts for the future beyond marrying Ruth Forrest, his childhood sweetheart, and eventually advancing to office manager. In the space of only eight months however, he had become the leading flying ace of the fifth fighter squadron and was twice decorated for heroism.”

Whatever is used, the speaker should make the most of his or her first few sentences to seize attention. A good opening can make the difference between an attentive and an indifferent audience.

A second function of the introduction is to bring needs to the surface. Though attention can be easily gained it can just as easily be lost. When an introduction goes on to reveal needs of individuals and the message meets those needs, the interest of an audience will be secured.

A third function of the introduction is to introduce the body of the message. In a deductive message this means that it will orient the listener to the main idea so that the theme of the talk will be quickly apparent. In an inductive message the introduction will familiarize the listener with only the subject of the presentation. The body of the message then completes it.

In addition to the above, the introduction displays other features. It should be kept short. It should not be started with an apology. Humor should be used carefully and not overdone.

If there is a scripture reading, it is best to place it between the introduction and the body of the message, especially if it is short. Long readings can divert the attention of the audience and lose ground gained through the introduction.

With the introduction completed, the next item is the conclusion. The purpose of the conclusion is to bring the message to a close. Though conclusions can take different shapes and forms, their ultimate goal is to allow the listener to see the truth of the message entire and complete, and to inform them of what God's truth demands of them.

and the speaker. However, one possibility is to simply summarize the message. The speaker looks back over the ground that has been covered and restates points covered along the way. In this way loose ends are tied together and a sense of closure is obtained.

Another tactic is to conclude with an illustration that summarizes the message's main idea or demonstrates how it works out in life. If an illustration was used in the introduction it can be returned to or even completed in the conclusion. This provides a motif for the message that allows closure when referred to at the message's end.

An appropriate quotation in the conclusion can capture the idea being proclaimed in stronger and more vivid words than the speaker is capable of using. The words from a hymn or poem are especially helpful here as they touch the heart and make room for the message to take root.

A message can be concluded with a question. For instance a message on witnessing might be developed from Acts 8 and the story of Phillip and the Ethiopian eunuch. A closing challenge can be given by asking: "Do you know God? Does your

neighbor? Who will tell her how, if your neighbor wanted to know God? Would Phillip? Will you?”

Another option for concluding a message is to do so with a prayer. This is effective only if it expresses the speaker’s desire for his or her audience based on the thrust of the message.

Specific directions can also be given to the listeners, to lead them to act on the message in the days ahead. Not every message can be resolved in this manner but it can be helpful where appropriate so that listeners know what is expected of them.

Whatever form is used, it is important not to introduce new material into the conclusion. The final moments of a message should be used to drive home what has been said. The audience must not be taken off into new concepts or thoughts. Having finished with the purpose of the message it is vital to conclude.

Step Six: Applying the Points.

There are three sides to the application question that can assist the lay preachers in promoting relevance. First, we must think about the individual in our congregation. Second, we must reflect upon the cultural setting. Finally, we must evaluate the type of application to be marshaled.

A colleague once asked, “How do you preach every week? I mean, how many times can you tell people to read their Bible and pray?” That question reveals something significant. All experienced preachers understand the joys, struggles, and dreams of our congregations. This is not intended to disparage the importance of God’s Word or

prayer. However, people need the Word to speak to them in a variety of areas. Donald Miller addresses this era when he observes:

Preaching is not mere speaking; it is an *act*. It accomplishes something. It never leaves a man where it finds him, but makes him either better or worse. Preaching should be founded on the Bible, which is the unique record of God's unique redemptive deed in Christ and which becomes the source and form for all Christian preaching.⁷

People weary quickly when you are not addressing them. We must prayerfully admit upon the poignant themes, which the text relates to in the lives of our hearers. The goal of preaching is to extract the truth of the Bible and inject it into the lives of the people. An example of the above that we will recognize would be the truth: "God will provide for all our needs abundantly."⁸ John Broadus argues the same point. He speaks of the need for relevant application. For Broadus, application "is not merely an appendage to the discussion or a subordinate part of it, but is the main thing to be done."⁹

Address Real-Life Needs.

In preaching we must speak to the joys and struggles of life. What issues do the people face in a week? Where do they live? What kinds of people are in the church? How does the Word of God for this week intersect with their lives? Paul Borden suggests an excellent procedure for preachers to practice as they develop abilities to intersect the Word with life. He states:

⁷ Donald G. Miller, The Way to Biblical Preaching (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1957), 26.

⁸ Walter L. Liefeld, New Testament Exposition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 96.

⁹ John Broadus, On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons (New York: Harper, 1944), 165.

Envision specific people in the congregation who each week you invite into your office for an imaginary visit. The group is a varied one. It may include a single mother, a business man climbing the corporate ladder, and empty nester, a professional woman balancing career and family, a lonely teenager, an active senior citizen, and so on. imagine where these individuals live, how they manage or mismanage life, as well as their needs and joys. Preach the sermon to these individuals, picturing where they would ask such questions as: 'what in the world do you mean? Do you really expect me to believe that? How does that idea work in real life? Do you really expect me to change in light of that reason?' Their questions indicate the places where you must illustrate, convince, work in specific wording, and apply.¹⁰

Borden's suggestion is an excellent discipline for a lay preacher to foster. It will help keep application real. But what are some basic motifs the lay preacher should keep in mind as he or she prepares to preach relevant message? Several areas of felt need for today's Samoan congregants and others are expanded below and in no order of importance.

Economic Struggles.

In our Samoan community some congregants make their living working as laborers. Within the last few years many companies have announced plans to lay-off thousands and thousands of workers state wide. This puts tremendous stress on the families at risk. What word from God do I have for them? How much pressure do our people feel to keep up with their neighbor's affluence?

¹⁰ Paul Borden, The Way to Biblical Preaching (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1957), 148.

Success.

In almost any church you have those driven to climb to the top. This is true with our Samoan community. However, we must keep in mind those who are on the way up, those who have attained it and discover it is empty, and those who are discouraged because they never ascended. What's the balance between work, home, ministry, etc.? What's the difference between contentment and apathy? Why are people driven to add accomplishment to accomplishment? Wherein should the believer find significance?

Fear.

People are afraid: afraid to grow old, afraid of losing a job, afraid of the future, often, of the past. There are scores of people in congregations (some in the pulpit) who are plagued by phobias and neuroses. Life seems so overwhelming. What does the Scripture say to me in my fears?

Worry/Anxiety.

One prudent person said it well, "Worry is like a rocking chair. It gives you something to do ... but it doesn't get you anywhere." Lots of people in our churches are wasting time on worry. Worry is often characterized by fear or anxiety. But, theologically, worry is a sign of nonbeing, an indication of possible separation from God. The apostle Paul says in his letter to the Philippians 4:6a; Do not worry about anything ...

the only way to overcome worry is to strengthen one self with God. And the lay preacher must tell the congregation that when God is within, you will not worry about anything.

Loss.

At the present time statistics show that there are more adults over 65 than people who are under 18 in the United States of America. Nonetheless, youth, health and fitness are idealized in our culture. Those who no longer fall into that category may be feeling like a minority group. Those who have youth and good health for the time being may become consumed with them. What's the balance?

Bitterness.

Everyone has been hurt at some time in his or her life. Some never heal. They are the unforgiving who love to lick their wounds.

I was invited to attend a seminar on the topic of forgiveness. The leader requested that all the seminar participants write the following on one side of a piece of paper: "Ways I have been hurt by others." On the other side the superscription was to say, "Ways that I have hurt others." He asked the people to start on the "Ways I have been hurt" side. The people would begin writing furiously. The leader would give those two minutes and then stop them. Some didn't want to stop; they would keep writing.

Next, the leader asked the participants to turn the paper over. “How I have hurt others” was now the topic. Some people would write slowly and thoughtfully. Others would stare into space and do nothing. People could hardly recall any times that they had hurt others. Wouldn’t it be great if it were reversed? There are many people in every congregation who have never dealt with hurt. We have much to say here.

Pride.

Pride is the primary deadly sin. It certainly can get us into trouble in church, home, work, or relationships of any kind.

As the story goes, a pilot was transporting a minister, computer wiz, and Boy Scout. About midway in the flight the pilot came back to the trio pale as a ghost. “We’re going down,” he shouted. “I only have three parachutes. I’m married with five children, so I’ve got one, and I’m jumping, Goodbye.” The computer expert leaped to his feet. He started, “I’m the smartest man in the world. Everyone is depending on me. So I need a parachute.” He picked one up, put it on and jumped. The minister looked sadly at the boy. “You take the last parachute, son. I’ve had a good life. I know the Lord. You take it.” The boy looked up smiling at the minister. “Don’t worry, pastor,” he said. “We can both take one. The smartest man in the world just picked up my knapsack and jumped.”

Pride can be fatal; it is at the root of many problems. Pride must be considered as we prepare to address the congregation.

Relationships.

Life is comprised of interpersonal relationships of various kinds. For many there are relationships with one's spouse and children. How does one's faith affect being a husband or wife? What does a good father or mother look like? How does one respond to an ex-spouse? How do I get along with my neighbors and their bratty kids? How do I relate to my boss? How can I challenge my subordinates in the workplace? How do I develop and cultivate a relationship with God? These and other questions can help us as we consider our congregation and the relationships they have.

Isolation.

We live in the most technologically communicative society the world has ever known; yet most people feel disconnected. The superficiality of life can seem overwhelming to people longing to belong. Keep in mind that although people are sitting together in the congregation, there are those who could not name one close friend at church.

Hope.

The story tells the tale. A terribly seasick passenger turning several shades of green leaned over the rail of the pleasure cruiser as it tossed to and from in the ocean. An attendant walking by noticed the man and stopped to encourage the nauseated traveler. "Don't worry sir, no one ever died of seasickness yet," he said. The sick man turned and

moaned, “Oh, don’t tell me that; it’s only the hope of dying that’s kept me alive this long!”

Many of our congregants feel like that traveler...hope is the only thing keeping them alive. We have a glorious message of hope: do we present it that way? We have a God who reigns; would people sense it by our preaching? People need hope to go on. We are not to be false prophets of an illusion of hope. However, since we are God’s own, we have a reason for continued hope. The world is not hopeless for the believer. We are under the Almighty’s wings. Our preaching should resound with hope!

Cultural Climate.

Another helpful step in applying the sermon is to flip through elements of the cultural milieu from which people are emerging. This permits the lay preacher to look at the text of Scripture from a variety of angles. It’s a bit like evaluating a many-faceted diamond from various points of light.

Materialism.

The pursuit of materialism is an immense drive in our society. I had a friend who worked in the commercial advertising industry for a time. He revealed that a major goal of advertisers is to create a sense of dissatisfaction. The supposed solution to this yearning is the purchase of whatever product is being advertised. Our people are bombarded with as many as 2000 slick messages every day that stealthily seek to sell them something.

Pragmatism.

People are no longer on a quest for truth. They are searching for what works. How can we help people to live biblically and theologically instead of only pragmatically?

Plan Your Application.

Personal and corporate considerations help evoke pertinent ways the text intersects with life. However, as the preacher carefully reflects on the applications prescribed by text, he/she must also evaluate the ways in which he or she will offer these applications. There are two types of application at the disposal of the preacher. The first is principle application, the second codified application.

Principle application, in essence, is a statement of the relevant aspects of a passage expressed in a general way. For instance, one form of principle application taken from 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 is that we should take good care of our bodies because they are the temple of the Holy Spirit. That is a general principle. It leaves the specific implementation of it to each individual.

A codified application derived from that principle might include (1) don't smoke, (2) don't overeat, (3) exercise regularly, and (4) maintain your ideal weight. The problem with codifying the principle can occur when we are imbalanced or when we fail to teach the general principle before we begin codifying.

When principle application is first employed, believers can see a variety of specific codes that might be employed. They will also be able to comprehend why some believers differ on various points. Codification without careful explanation of principle application can engender a shallow moralist and critical, judgmental spirit in short order. My hope is that, as we reflect on the people we minister to and the culture that surrounds us, we may be able to apply the Word relevantly, wisely, and to the glory of God.

The six steps of exposition have been explained: studying the text, stating the theme, developing the outline, illustrating the points, introducing and concluding the sermon, and applying the points. At this time the lay preacher should be able to possess a general knowledge of the process of sermon development.

Style and Delivery.

Having completed the introduction and conclusion and the application, it is helpful to next write out a complete manuscript of the message. This often reveals problems that would not otherwise be recognized. Gaps in understanding a thought can emerge. Difficulties with language become apparent. A lay preacher must use ordinary language for the purpose of presenting a clear message. Without a manuscript, the speaker is left to guess at the correct use of words and their order. A manuscript helps to clear the speaker's thinking as well as his or her style.

Style involves the choice of words to be used. The way in which a speaker does this, be it dull or stimulating, determines his or her style. Style not only varies from person to person, but also changes according to the situation. For instance, speaking at an

outdoor evangelistic rally will usually cause a speaker to change styles from that employed at a Christian men's or ladies' meeting. An effective speaker therefore must choose words appropriate to the occasion, as well as to the audience and to himself or herself as a speaker.

A number of qualities will enhance a speaker's style and should be aimed for in writing the manuscript. The first is clarity. Unless an audience understands what is being said, the most eloquent message will be lost. People will not struggle to follow a speaker who is not clear. They will simply tune him or her out. The solution to this is to speak clearly.

To do this, the speaker should keep sentences short. Shorter sentences keep confusion at a minimum. In a manuscript, brief sentences help to keep the speaker's thoughts focused and clear. A good rule is to package one thought in one sentence. For two thoughts use two sentences. Long, involved sentences can easily lose an audience. Shorter, familiar words are also advantageous, while long, unfamiliar ones tend to obscure meaning.

Style is improved as well, through vividness. An effective style exchanges banal words and phrases for those that impact the listener's mind and feelings. Fresh figures of speech must be employed that help the listener visualize what the speaker is saying. Specific, concrete details must be used that appeal to the audience's senses and help them to see, hear, taste, smell, and touch what the speaker is communicating. Particulars need to be visualized and painted for the listener in living color.

Another way to enhance style is by being direct and personal. While a writer can gain attention using the third person, such as "his" or "us," the speaker will find greater

receptivity using “you” or “I”. Every effort should be made to speak to the audience directly, addressing their needs and concerns. If the message is to be relevant it must connect with the intended hearers and in this sense, will resemble lively conversation with give and take. Questions can be asked and a response requested.

When the manuscript is complete, delivery needs to be considered. Although a speaker may feel that his or her work is done once the manuscript has been finished, a presentation must still follow. Because a poor or faulty delivery can ruin an otherwise good message, several factors must be considered.

In speaking, both nonverbal and verbal communication takes place. Nonverbal communication includes the use of eye contact, body movement, clothing, and the like. Verbal communication encompasses what is said and the way in which it is presented. Both play a key role in the delivery of a message and deserve careful study. In nonverbal features, beware of random body movement. Suit gestures to words and words to gestures. One must also avoid needless pacing which gives off an air of nervousness to an audience.

Eye contact is essential, and it is in this regard that an overuse of notes must be sedulously avoided. Effective communicators look at the people to whom they are speaking. If they don’t, individuals will assume the message is not directed to them. While notes can give a sense of security to the speaker, they defraud the audience of the speaker’s attention. Personal attention through eye contact is lost and the effectiveness of the presentation is compromised.

Physical appearance must be carefully considered. If an audience is distracted by the speaker's dress or an unkempt look, the message will lose appeal. Facial expression must be monitored as well, to ensure that an appealing image is conveyed.

In verbal communication, the voice should be used correctly. The vocal mechanism including the vocal chords, the tongue, the teeth and so forth, should be used efficiently. The voice should also be used fully. Vocal range should be wide and varied in order to give variety to the presentation. Monotone speakers easily bore their listeners because of a lack of intonation and inflection in their speech. The voice should be attractive and pleasant to hear.

Finally, the message should be rehearsed before the actual delivery. On one hand, this can be done by actively rehearsing before a mirror or with a tape recorder. Attention should be given to the appropriate use of movement and gestures. The vocal delivery should be clear and varied in pitch, intensity, and rate. On the other hand, rehearsal can take place quietly while sitting at a desk. Attention should be directed to the structure of the message and the progress of thought. That which is written on paper may lose clarity when spoken. Rehearsal provides an opportunity to make changes to the presentation before it is too late. When this is accomplished, rehearsal allows the speaker to work out the nuances of the message before facing an expectant audience.

Practicing Speaking.

Now is the time to be ready to deliver the message. After studying and all diligent preparation, the lay preacher is ready to preach. The opportunity has arrived to

present the message before the congregation. Generally the message should not take more than twenty minutes to present.

In terms of the message organization, the introduction needs to be analyzed. Does the message capture attention, needs, and orientation toward the subject? Is there a central idea that is being put forward? Can it be stated concisely? Is the development clear in the body of the message? Is the central idea prominent? Are the transitions clear?

The conclusion should build to a climax. Does it summarize the message presented or give instruction on how to implement the message's teaching? The content of the message must also be considered. Is the subject significant? Is the exegesis satisfactory? Does the homiletic idea adequately reflect the exegetical idea within the passage? Are the supporting materials interesting, relevant, and helpful?

In terms of style, is the grammar correct? Is the use of language vivid, direct, and personal? Is it clear? Are sentences simple and short? Are the words used familiar and not lengthy?

Is the delivery effective? Does the speaker give the impression that he or she is speaking directly to the audience? Does the message sound like lively conversation? Is there good eye contact and appropriate body movement? Are gestures fitting? Is there good facial expression?

What about the oral presentation? Is the voice easy to listen to? Is there good articulation? Is there variety in force, pitch, and rate?

Is the overall presentation relevant to audience needs? Does it connect? Does it lead to or call for a change in people's lives? Was this message beneficial in some

definite way to those listening? Did the speaker seem knowledgeable about the subject?

Was he or she enthusiastic?

Each of the above areas should be addressed in the evaluation, and feedback given to the speaker. As much as possible the experience should be constructive and positive.

At the beginning, the lay preachers will be nervous; an unkind or ruthless evaluation could lead to an abandonment of public speaking. Every effort should be made to encourage while at the same time giving a helpful appraisal of strengths and weaknesses.

Chapter 5

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

This project was initiated with a definite theory in mind. It proposed that given the needs of our Samoan church, one of the most effective strategies for reaching the non-churched and for building up the spiritual strength of believers lies in the equipping of lay preachers to prepare biblical messages. However, courses and training to equip Samoan lay preachers to speak in non-preaching settings are not plentiful this is where a training program appears most needed.

There are many opportunities within church settings for lay preachers to proclaim Biblical messages. These include presentations to women's and men's groups, boys' and girls' clubs, outreach programs, youth rallies, personal testimony times, and so forth. But while lay preachers are often called upon to minister in these situations, little attention is paid to helping them do so effectively. The result is often an inferior presentation to that which might be delivered if training had been provided.

With this in mind a project was proposed which covered the preparation of biblical messages at an introductory level. All the steps provided were envisioned beginning with text selection and study culminating in the delivery of a biblical message. However, it was anticipated that the lay preacher would have a keen desire to advance the kingdom of God through the proclamation of God's Word and a wish to improve his or her ability. It was also assumed that those who are serious about their calling would have a fair degree of Bible background and some experience in preparing and delivering messages based upon God's Word.

As the project unfolded a number of considerations emerged which initially had been of only minor interest. In the process my own understanding was broadened. For example, my background is within the Samoan Lay Preacher movement in the early 1970's. Traditionally the Samoan Lay Preacher movement has emphasized the participation of the laity and especially lay preachers. In recent years I have come to question this emphasis and in the writing of this project, an opportunity was provided to address this concern.

In the process, however, an appreciation was renewed for the accessibility that the Samoan Lay Preacher movement had provided over the years for the participation of the laity. Their emphasis on the priesthood of all believers ensured that many individuals participated publicly in church ministry who might otherwise have remained silent.

Another realization that emerged in the development of this project was the overwhelming need for a training manual. As one who has served as a lay preacher, I have had experience in preaching God's Word without the benefit of formal instruction in homiletics. Supervising Sunday school also provided an opportunity to observe the discomfort teachers felt in teaching their pupils without formal training. Having gained greater insights through the study of homiletics, I sensed a need for a manual for Samoan lay preachers who are interested in preaching. The result was a program of instruction, which covered the basics of expository preaching.

Within the development of the project itself the initial intention was to provide a manual that would introduce the laity to the preparation of biblical messages in general.

The hypothesis of this thesis is that lay preachers trained in the preparation of biblical messages will be able to more effectively communicate God's word within the

Samoan church. Moreover, it is my opinion that the most effective biblical messages will be expository in nature. This emphasis on expository preparation was not intended at the outset of the project. As time went on it became clear that, given the need for clarity and focus, a single style had to be developed. As well, the expository style (as opposed to topical or textual) came closest to ensuring that lay preachers produced a truly biblical message. And it is a style that seems familiar to the Samoan lay preachers.

The following, six steps were proposed covering the basics of message preparation. They included:

1. The selection, study, and exegesis of a biblical text.
2. The development of a main idea or theme that unifies the message around a single focus.
3. Determining the relevance of the passage to the world of the listener.
4. The preparation of a message outline together with supporting materials.
5. The formulation of an effective introduction and conclusion.
6. The application of the points.

The third step calls attention to audience analysis, and steps 4, 5, and 6 invite the preacher to come to terms with the message form. After the developmental questions have been addressed to the text, they must next be directed at the audience to determine its need for the message. That need might lie in the area of explanation, proof, or application. One overriding need often predominates and in turn determines the form the message will take.

This has proved an area of uncertainty for me in the past. The connection between the developmental questions and the message form has not always been clear.

In the course of writing the training manual, this issue had to be addressed. The process of working through the steps of message preparation in order to teach them to others was invaluable in clarifying the points involved.

The hope of this project is to provide an adequate training manual to offer guidelines for the Samoan lay preacher with proper emphasis on biblical preaching. The topic is extremely relevant and timely especially for those Samoan lay preachers who have occasion to speak. It is also my hope that this manual can be offered to a larger audience, whether in church setting, Bible school, or a program that helps equip the laity to speak effectively to this generation.

Lay preachers in the Samoan congregations are asked to preach regularly in a church setting and teach the Bible to groups such as men, women, and youth. I propose that they would do so more profitably were greater training offered. The goal of this project is to make such training available. With it, each Samoan congregation of the United Methodist church can realize more fully the potential of one of the greatest forces for good it has available to it: the church lay preacher within its midst.

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